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SUBJECT: COSTA RICA: NICARAGUAN ELECTION CHIEF IN \$95K CONTROVERSY

[¶1.](#) (U) Nicaraguan Supreme Electoral Council president Roberto Rivas has caused a stir in Costa Rica for the second time in a month, after reports came out on November 26th that he and his family have been improperly using duty-free cars with diplomatic license plates. The cars (valued at a combined USD 338,000) are officially assigned to the Nicaraguan Embassy, where Rivas' brother Harold Rivas is the Ambassador. Roberto Rivas saved an estimated \$95,000 by importing them duty free. The Costa Rican MFA confirmed that Roberto Rivas and his family are not accredited diplomats in Costa Rica, and has said that they will be looking into the matter further.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) This comes almost a month after reports surfaced that Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's children were living in a USD 4.4 million condominium complex outside of San Jose owned by Rivas. Rivas and his family live between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, where they own at least one additional piece of property and a private plane which Embassy contacts say makes frequent trips into and out of the country.

[¶3.](#) (SBU) Comment: Embassy sources have told us that there might be more to come regarding Roberto Rivas and his activities in Costa Rica. The Nicaraguan public servant has amassed quite a collection of high-priced toys in a country where his official immigration status is that of a visitor. While he might have hoped to keep a low profile in Costa Rica, good investigative journalism has brought to light his questionable choice of tenants and probable tax-fraud.

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